

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VIENTI 05825 250918Z

21

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 AID-20 IGA-02 FBO-01 A-01 M-02 OPR-02

OC-06 CCO-00 LAB-06 SIL-01 IO-14 SCCT-02 NIC-01 DRC-01

/150 W

----- 115783

P R 250810Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 116

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMCONSUL UDORN

CDR USSAG NKP

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 5825

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, AFSP, LA

SUBJECT: TAPS GUARDS STRIKE

REFERENCE: VIENTIANE 5802 (NOTAL)

1. TRANSAIR PROTECTIVE SERVICES (TAPS) GUARDS STRIKE AGAINST THEIR EMPLOYER AND U.S. MISSION WENT INTO SECOND DAY WITH A NUMBER OF NEW FACTORS INDICATING SITUATION MAY BE POLITICAL IN NATURE. ONE FACTOR IS BENEFICIAL: PRIME MINISTER'S SON, PRINCE PANYA, WHO IS GENERAL MANAGER OF ROYAL AIR LAOS (RAL), HAS INVOLVED HIMSELF IN ATTEMPT TO CALM DOWN SITUATION. THE OTHER IS OMINOUS: THERE IS INCREASED EVIDENCE OF PATHET LAO INFLUENCE WITH LEADERSHIP OF STRIKE.

2. AS OF LATE YESTERDAY AFTERNOON, STRIKERS HAD
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 VIENTI 05825 250918Z

OCCUPIED GSO COMPOUND, TAPS HEADQUARTERS, AND PART

OF SILVER CITY RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND, ALL OF WHICH
ARE SIDE BY SIDE.

3. FOLLOWING THREE AND A HALF HOUR NEGOTIATING SESSION
AT 1100 HOURS JULY 24, DELEGATION OF STRIKERS LED BY
APPARENT STRIKE LEADER, NAMED OUNKEO, RETURNED TO
TAPS HEADQUARTERS ALONG WITH DICK BERNARD, TRANS-AIR
REPRESENTATIVE IN LAOS, WHO HAD ATTENDED NEGOTIATION
SESSION. OUNKEO TOLD STRIKERS THROUGH BULL-HORN THAT
THAI SUPERVISOR HAD BEEN FIRED, AND THAT EMBASSY HAD
AGREED TO MEET DELEGATION AGAIN AT 1500 HOURS JULY 25
WITH REPRESENTATIVE OF BUREAU OF LABOR OF MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
WELFARE PRESENT. HE THEN LAUNCHED INTO TIRADE AGAINST
"AMERICAN IMPERIALISTS" AND EXACERBATED RATHER THAN
CALMED STRIKERS' IRE. BERNARD WAS KEPT HOSTAGE INSIDE
TAPS HEADQUARTERS, TOGETHER WITH TWO AMERICAN TAPS
SUPERVISORS (FRALIA AND SPRAGUE) AND LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE
STAFF.

4. AT 1900 HOURS, DCM, ADMIN COUNSELOR AND EMBASSY
LOCAL EMPLOYEE WHO IS PRESIDENT OF U.S. MISSION LOCAL
EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION (ALEAM) WENT TO TAPS HEADQUARTERS
TO MAKE SURE STRIKERS HAD GOTTEN MESSAGE THAT EMBASSY
WAS PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE THEIR DEMANDS IN EQUITABLE
MANNER. SOON AFTERWARDS, PRINCE PANYA SHOWED UP
AND ADDRESSED STRIKERS. PANYA'S INVOLVEMENT OCCURRED
PARTLY BECAUSE TRANS-AIR IS AFFILIATED WITH RAL, WHICH
ALSO HOLDS ONE CONTRACT FOR GUARD SERVICES AT US
MISSION FACILITIES AT WATTAY AIRPORT. ATTEMPTING TO
WEAN LEADERSHIP OF STRIKERS AWAY FROM OUNKEO, PANYA
TOLD THEM THAT HE SYMPATHIZED WITH THEIR DEMANDS AND WAS
PREPARED TO HELP THEM. HE OFFERED TO PROVIDE THEM WITH
FOOD AND TO ADVOCATE THEIR CAUSE. (SUBSEQUENTLY RAL
DELIVERED 350 DINNERS, WHISKY AND CIGARETTES TO
STRIKERS LAST NIGHT, AS WELL AS BREAKFAST THIS MORNING.
RAL ALSO FED HOSTAGES).

5. STRIKERS REMAINED AT TAPS HEADQUARTERS OVERNIGHT
BUT IT WAS CLEAR THAT THEIR MOOD HAD BEEN GROWING
UGLIER UNDER CONSTANT HARANGUES FROM OUNKEO. DURING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 VIENTI 05825 250918Z

NIGHT, GROUP OF STRIKERS HIJACKED USAID FIRE ENGINE
FROM KM-6 HOUSING COMPOUND AND DROVE IT TO TAPS
HEADQUARTERS. JUST AFTER DAWN, EMBASSY DUTY OFFICER
SUCCEEDED IN OBTAINING RELEASE OF BERNARD, BUT
FRALIA AND SPRAGUE, AND 20 LOCAL SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL
ARE STILL BEING HELD INSIDE AS OF 1200 HOURS JULY 25.
THIS PROBLEM OF "HOSTAGES" IS THE ONE WHICH IS NOW
CAUSING US THE GREATEST CONCERN. OVERNIGHT, JOINT

POLICE FORCE (JPF) IN VIENTIANE AND PROVINCIAL POLICE OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS PROVIDED ADEQUATE PROTECTION FOR US INSTALLATIONS. WE DID NOT REQUEST THEM TO EXPEL STRIKERS, NOR DID THEY ATTEMPT TO DO SO. VIENTIANE SIDE POLICE UNILATERALLY GUARDED ALL INSTALLATIONS OVERNIGHT EXCEPT TAPS HEADQUARTERS, WHERE PATHET LAO POLICE WERE ALSO STATIONED. WE FURNISHED VEHICLES AND FOOD FOR POLICE CONTINGENTS. THIS MORNING GSO AND AMERICAN ASSISTANT ENTERED GSO COMPOUND AND WERE TOLD THEY COULD NOT LEAVE. GSO LEFT WITHOUT DIFFICULTY SOME HOURS LATER, HOWEVER. ONE EMBASSY AND ONE USAID OFFICER HAVE REMAINED IN GSO COMPOUND.

6. DCM CALLED ON SECSTAE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TIANETHONE AT 1030 HOURS JULY 25 TO FORMALIZE OUR REQUEST FOR PROTECTION AND AT SECSTATE'S REQUEST WE FOLLOWED UP WITH DIPLOMATIC NOTE. WE INDICATED IN NOTE THAT EMBASSY WAS PREPARED TO MEET STRIKERS DEMANDS IN EQUITABLE MANNER. WE DID NOT REQUEST THAT STRIKERS BE EXPELLED FROM US INSTALLATIONS. WE ALSO LEARNED THIS MORNING THAT OUNKEO AND STRIKE LEADERSHIP HAVE PRODUCED NEW DEMANDS. OUNKEO IS DEMANDING THAT HE ACCEDE TO POSITION OF THAI SUPERVISOR WHO WAS DISMISSED, WHICH IS SENIOR NON-AMERICAN TAPS POSITION. OUNKEO HAS ALSO DEMANDED THAT HENCEFORTH ALL INSTRUCTIONS TO GUARDS BE TRANSMITTED THROUGH SPECIAL COMMITTEE WHICH HE WILL HEAD, AND WHICH WILL DETERMINE WHETHER INSTRUCTIONS ARE TO BE IMPLEMENTED.

7. THESE DEMANDS AND THE TONE USED BY STRIKERS SUGGEST THAT PATHET LAO MAY WELL BE INSTIGATORS OF WHOLE SITUATION. PANYA INFORMS US THAT SOME TIME AGO PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER SINGKAPO (PL) WAS QUESTIONING HIM ABOUT TAPS FORCE AND REMARKING THAT ITS EXISTENCE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 VIENTI 05825 250918Z

WAS CONTRARY TO PROVISIONS ON NEUTRALIZATION OF VIENTIANE IN LAOS ACCORDS. LOCAL SOURCES REPORT THAT OUNKEO HAS BEEN SEEN ENTERING PL INSTALLATIONS OVER PAST TWO WEEKS, AND THAT FIVE PL CADRES IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES HAVE BEEN SEEN MOVING AROUND TAPS HEADQUARTERS. OUNKEO'S HARANGUES TO STRIKERS HAVE INCLUDED STANDARD PL ANTI-AMERICAN PHRASEOLOGY.

8. SECOND NEGOTIATING SESSION IS TO BE HELD AT 1500 HOURS TODAY AT ADMIN. COUNSELOR'S OFFICE IN EMBASSY COMPOUND. PRINCE PANYA, DICK BERNARD OF TRANSAIR, DIRECTOR OF LABOR THONGBAI OF SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTRY, AND DELEGATION OF STRIKERS LED BY OUNKEO ARE TO ATTEND. WE SHALL TAKE POSITION THAT WE CAN MEET THOSE DEMANDS OF THE STRIKERS THAT ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH BENEFITS

GENERALLY PROVIDED BY THE HOST GOVERNMENT. AS REGARDS
ACTUAL MANAGEMENT OF GUARDS SERVICE, NEGOTIATING POSITION
IS COMPLICATED SINCE U.S. MISSION IS ONLY CONTRACTING
AGENCY, NOT FORMAL EMPLOYER, OF GUARDS FORCE, ALTHOUGH
MOST GUARDS BELIEVE THEMSELVES TO BE WORKING FOR US MISSION
DIRECTLY.

9. WE NOTIFIED JPF OF NEGOTIATING SESSION TO BE HELD
AT 1500 HOURS TODAY IN CHANCERY AREA, AND AT 1315 HOURS
CONTINGENT OF 35 PL AND VIENTIANE SIDE JPF TROOPS WITH
WEAPONS DEPLOYED IN CHANCERY AREA AND ARE GUARDING
ALL GATES. MIXED PL AND VIENTIANE SIDE GUARDS ARE
ALSO APPEARING AT OTHER AMERICAN INSTALLATIONS.
WHITEHOUSE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, WAGES, DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, FRINGE BENEFITS, LABOR STRIKES, SECURITY GUARDS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: kelleyw0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974VIENTI05825
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740201-0723
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740716/aaaaanok.tel
Line Count: 183
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: VIENTIANE 5802 (NOTAL)
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: kelleyw0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06-Aug-2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <24 FEB 2003 by kelleyw0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TAPS GUARDS STRIKE
TAGS: PINS, AFSP, LA, US, TRANSAIR PROTECTIVE SERVICE, TAPS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005